

Apprenticeships
Are Us



CHILD SAFETY PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Apprenticeships Are Us Limited has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Safety Code of Conduct are in place.

This document complies with the National Standards for Group Training Organisations (Standard 2.2), which mandates the monitoring of child safety within GTO operations. Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd (ARU) ensures that apprentices and trainees are protected from harm, including in all host employer environments. This involves regularly reviewing child safety practices, reporting systems, and staff training.

The Managing Director of Apprenticeships Are Us Limited is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse.
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring that all adults within the Apprenticeships Are Us Limited community are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety).
- Providing support for staff, contractors, and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd ensures that all child safety policies and procedures are culturally competent and inclusive. This includes providing training to staff and volunteers to appropriately support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities, as per the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*.

All managers must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times.
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible.
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Management should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff/volunteers/contractors share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and Apprenticeships Are Us Limited policy and procedures in relation to child protection and comply with all requirements.
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

DEFINITIONS

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect, or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g., for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief are a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- a) the child is in need of protection,
- b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury," or
- c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A '*reasonable belief*' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A '*reasonable belief*' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
- b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
- c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- d) professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

EMPLOYMENT OF NEW PERSONNEL

Apprenticeships Are Us Limited undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation.
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share Apprenticeships Are Us Limited values and commitment to protect children; and
- prevent a person from working at Apprenticeships Are Us Limited if they pose a risk to children.

Apprenticeships Are Us Limited requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Apprenticeships Are Us Limited.

Apprenticeships Are Us Limited may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate before they commence working at Apprenticeships Are Us Limited and during their time with Apprenticeships Are Us Limited at regular intervals.

Apprenticeships Are Us Limited will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of child safety policies and procedures.

All employees, volunteers, and contractors must undergo a Working with Children Check (WWCC) or equivalent in accordance with state-based legislation, such as the *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*. Additionally, all personnel must complete child safety training prior to commencing their roles and at regular intervals during their engagement with Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Apprenticeships Are Us Limited will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

Apprenticeships Are Us Limited will have a risk and compliance sub-committee committed to identifying and managing risks at Apprenticeships Are Us Limited.

Risk and compliance sub-committee members will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

In addition to physical safety, cyber safety is also a priority for Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd. The organisation complies with the *Cybersecurity Standards Act 2023* to protect children in online environments. This includes ensuring that all digital interactions involving children are monitored, and no inappropriate contact is made through social media or other digital platforms.

REPORTING

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They must also advise their supervisor about their concern.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter must be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Whistleblower protections under the *Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2024* ensure that any staff, volunteers, or contractors who report suspected child abuse or misconduct are protected from retaliation. Complaints can be made confidentially through designated reporting channels, and all concerns will be thoroughly investigated.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the Managing Director and to any external regulatory body such as the police. This policy aligns with the *Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)* and the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*, which outline mandatory reporting obligations for organisations working with children. It is essential that all personnel comply with these laws by reporting any suspicion of abuse to the appropriate authorities

The tables below include the contact details and reporting guidelines of the reporting authority in each Australian state and territory:

- **Australian Capital Territory** https://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe#_howto
- **New South Wales** <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/reporting-child-at-risk>
- **Northern Territory** <https://nt.gov.au/law/crime/report-child-abuse>
- **Queensland** <https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/protecting-children>
- **South Australia** <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/health-and-wellbeing/child-abuse/report-child-abuse>
- **Tasmania** <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/children/child-safety-service/>

- **Western Australia** <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/child-protection>

INVESTIGATING

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all employees, contractors, or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the Managing Director will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Managing Director may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice. The Managing Director will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time-to-time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the Managing Director shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

RESPONDING

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached Apprenticeships Are Us Limited policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of Apprenticeships Are Us Limited or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with Apprenticeships Are Us Limited. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Apprenticeships Are Us Limited will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

REVIEWING

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether Apprenticeships Are Us Limited child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

As part of the National Standards for Group Training Organisations, Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd reviews its child safety procedures on an annual basis and after any reportable incident. These reviews incorporate feedback from children, families, staff, and volunteers, ensuring that the organisation remains compliant with evolving legal obligations and best practices.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- *Child Safe Code of Conduct*
- *Child Protection Policy*
- *Child Safety Statement*
- *The law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory*

AUTHORISATION

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Managing Director

Apprenticeships Are Us Limited

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Authorised by	Authorisation Date	Sections	Amendment
1.1			All	N/A
1.2	M. Wentworth	01/02/2018	All	Change of CEO
1.3	M. Wentworth	29/10/2024	All	Cover page, minor information update